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March 2020

Commissioner's 2020 Annual NJDOT Town Hall Meeting

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IN THIS EDITION

The Road Ahead - page 2
Town Hall Meeting - page 3
Route 47 bridge - page 6
Transportation Research Board - page 8
Toastmasters - page 9
Black History Month - page 10
Contractor Venture - page 11
TID DOTS - page 12

The Road Ahead: Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti

Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti

Dear NJDOT Family,

I was extremely pleased to see so many staff at the Second Annual Town Hall event in February so that we could celebrate the great work accomplished by the Department in 2019. The many accomplishments achieved during the year made it a struggle to keep the presentation to only 90 minutes.

It is apparent that the staff has embraced the Commitment to Communities (C2C) initiative, Five Core Values and Mission Statement launched last year and is using that framework to plan and execute their daily work – and for that I am grateful.

With a path of success already paved, 2020 will be another opportunity to grow our brand with the public and local governments. Let us set new goals, and once again strive for and achieve excellence.

I now encourage you all to continue your personal journey of professional growth by participating in educational and training opportunities. Challenge yourself, step out of your comfort zone, network with other organizations, become a conference presenter, share your knowledge and expertise with local agencies and your colleagues throughout the country. Put yourself in new places, where new ideas can be sparked creating opportunity for you and for the Department.

Strive to make 2020 a great year for YOU and for NJDOT! *Diane*

NJDOT participated in the collection of prom gowns, formal dresses and formal men's wear in support of the NJ Turnpike Authority (NJTA) program that the late John Cifelli, former Director of Maintenance began years ago, and continues as his legacy.

Carteret High School students received 88 dresses and 6 suits from NJDOT donations to enjoy at their proms and special dances.

Special thanks to Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, NJTA Executive Director John Keller and NJDOT Assistant Commissioner Andrew Tunnard for giving staff the opportunity to collect these items and for taking time from their busy schedules to participate.

Thank you to all of the NJDOT staff who opened their hearts and their closets to donate, and everyone who helped to make this drive a success.

2020 Second Annual Commissioner Town Hall Event

Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti held the second annual NJDOT Town Hall event to review 2019 staff accomplishments and celebrate the great strides made toward incorporating the Commitment to Communities initiative into our operational practices.

The 90-minute Town Hall event was held in the Ewing Headquarters cafeteria on February 18 and was live-streamed to the Mt. Arlington, Cherry Hill and Bordentown locations. The program highlighted the Department's Commitment to Communities (C2C) initiative, which was launched nearly one year ago at the first Town Hall.

The Commissioner reviewed C2C's Five Core Values and Mission Statement and assessed the organization's progress towards meeting those goals.

She also emphasized some of the dynamic and successful initiatives launched by the Department that incorporated these values into its operational practices and communications.

Increased Communication

A key 2019 goal was to increase communication with the public and elected officials focusing on the ways in which NJDOT enhances the quality of life for residents and the traveling public. Social media outreach was significantly increased on all of the major platforms to address that goal. The use of daily Facebook and Twitter posts featuring staff, projects, and safety messages broadly expanded our public reach and enhanced the Department's brand.

NJDOT incorporated LinkedIn into its social media mix to announce job opportunities, present videos featuring staff, and other career related insights establishing the NJDOT as a great place to work. Contributing to our positive brand image is the honor of being named a 2020 Top Employer by DiversityJobs.com in both Transportation and Government for our outreach, commitment and dedication to hiring from all diverse groups.

The Commitment to Communities initiative was further expanded with the creation of the C2C newsletter. More than 6,000 external stakeholders and staff receive the emailed newsletter with articles that are relevant to local communities. The newsletter focuses on investments that keep the infrastructure in a state of good repair, shares images with brief text featuring NJDOT staff and projects, and announces business opportunities and public information sessions.

The reintroduction of the *Transporter* employee newsletter after a two-year hiatus increases internal communication with staff. The publication highlights staff accomplishments, awards, cultural activities, and community service initiatives that are being carried out within the department such as the Winter Coat Drive, food collection, and youth bicycle safety programs.

Serving Communities

One of the crowning achievements of 2019 was the creation of the Local Aid Resource Center. The Commissioner invited Laine Rankin and Veronica Murphy from the Division of Local Aid to the podium to explain how the NJDOT Local Aid Unit demystified the Federal and State grant process for local governments by creating the online Resource Center. The Resource Center provides extensive information on how to access grants and programs, guidelines, application deadlines, learning events, and more.

Local Aid also is working with the private sector by engaging small and disadvantaged businesses, listening to their needs, and informing them of new opportunities at events such as the Business Expo and Forum. The event provided potential contractors with direct links to NJDOT staff contacts, clearing a path for enhanced opportunities.

The League of Municipalities served as another opportunity for the Department to highlight the many programs and projects accomplished that serve the needs of communities. NJDOT participated in the event with an expanded presence and multiple

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

exhibition booths, further increasing the range and scope of our interactions with our public and private sector partners.

In 2019, the Commissioner stated that she wanted staff to reframe their perspective and embrace the concept that NJDOT is a customer service agency. The organization must strive to meet the needs of the traveling public in the state and those that pass through its borders. To achieve this goal, staff was empowered through training, opening lines of communication within the ranks to share new ideas and methods of achieving success, and having access to additional resources.

Operational Accomplishments

Among the accomplishments featured was the record number of operations contracts awarded - 63, totaling $364.5 million during the year. There were 380 lane miles resurfaced, and 10,000 mile-marker, route number and direction signs upgraded statewide through a multi-year federally funded project.

The Safety Service Patrol marked its 25th Anniversary of patrolling 225 miles of New Jersey roads. SSP has assisted more than 1.5 million motorists and first responders over their 25 years of service.

The New Jersey Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Response Training program was recognized as ranking fourth in the country for the number of trained responders. The NJTIM.org website also underwent a redesign. The site now offers public sector training tools to empower outside organizations with new skills.

Capital Program Management

The Commissioner ended the 2019 recap with a strong report of the work achieved by Capital Program Management (CPM).

The Unit awarded $805 million in contracts and completed 71 projects. Nearly half of all of the bridges in the state, 3,400, were inspected during the year. Twenty-seven bridges were improved and removed from the structurally deficient list.

Topping off the good bridge news was the reopening of the Route 72 Old Causeway Bridge one year ahead of schedule.

Major Access Permits Improves Process

The Major Access Permits unit took the Commissioner's 2019 challenge to reduce permit issuance time to a new record. They accomplished the goal and set a new record for issuing Major Access Permits in under one year's time. The objective was achieved in part due to Staff Augmentation.

Staff Augmentation enlists hired consultants to fill temporary staffing gaps between our newest employees and the seasoned veterans. This allows new employees to gain experience and knowledge while NJDOT continues to get work accomplished within appropriate timeframes.

Continued on page 5

HUMAN RESOURCES

579 Promotions processed
(not including journeyman titles)

378 new hires processed

265 vacancy postings processed

215 promotional and other certifications

128 promotional exams and announcements

HUMAN RESOURCES

Training and Tuition Aid Statistics for the 1st Quarter of the Federal Fiscal Year 2020

Training Funds Obligated: $76,108.00

37 Participants

Tuition Aid Obligated: $212,895

55 Employees in Graduate Level Programs

24 Employees in Undergraduate Level Programs

Continued from page 4

CAPITAL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT FY 2019 NJDOT

Operations and Capital Project Management together awarded 122 projects totaling more than **$1 billion CPM awarded:**

41 bridge projects worth $377 million
51 paving projects worth $428 million
71 projects completed

Staff Q&A with the Commissioner

Numerous staff questions were received prior to the event and were addressed by the Commissioner.

There were several questions related to NJDOT offering an Alternative Work Week. The Commissioner stated that due to the Department's reduced staff, we would not be able to incorporate that work model. She also stated that as a 24/7 365 day-a-year organization, we cannot balance the understaffing and work levels with reduced days.

An inquiry was addressed regarding the increased use of teleconferencing to reduce out-of-office and travel times for the regional staff. The Commissioner said that while teleconferencing is an important tool, and is widely available, it is important to get out, meet peers at other locations, and build working relationships.

The Commissioner also was asked if there are efforts being made to make the NJDOT complex, regional offices and yards more energy efficient. In response, she stated that all lights have been converted to LED and Facilities has installed a new HVAC system that is more energy efficient, and has installed a High Efficiency Condensing Boiler as part of the Energy Saving Improvement Plan. There is also a plan to install Solar Panels around NJDOT Headquarters.

Congratulations to the Commissioner on this incredibly successful event. Attendees enjoyed light refreshments that were generously provided by the Employee Memorial Committee. The Commissioner plans to hold another similar event in the second half of the year.

Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti Shares her Vision for 2020

The Commissioner identified many positive accomplishments in 2019 during her remarks including the creation of the highly successful NJDOT Local Aid Resource Center. As a reflection of its success, one of her 2020 Department goals is to incorporate the Resource Center model into other areas of the Department.

The plan is to create public facing NJDOT teams that can problem solve with local governments and communities to complement the work that is already being managed in the Government and Constituent Relations unit.

Another key Department priority she set for 2020 is continuing to streamline the Capital Program Management project delivery cycle. The Commissioner will be working with the Assistant Commissioners and others to determine the best way to reduce the timeline of our project delivery and manage the workflow process.

This may include changing our project planning cycle to a 5-year period versus the current one-year cycle. The leadership team will also examine the number of projects in Concept Development. Many projects that go through Concept Development never make it to fruition, thereby providing unrealistic expectations for the communities we serve and use funds better allocated elsewhere.

Lastly, the Commissioner encouraged staff to participate in career development as much as possible. This includes applying for training programs, accessing tuition grants for enhanced education, and attending and presenting at professional organization events.

All of these activities enhances one's personal visibility and that of the NJDOT. Both she and the Governor want the State, and particularly NJDOT, to have an increased presence at professional events across the country.

Route 47 Bridge over I-295 replacement project finishes nine months ahead of schedule

The Route 47 Bridge over I-295 replacement project in Gloucester County is now complete nine months ahead of schedule, thanks to an innovative Value Engineering Change Proposal (VECP).

The bridge replacement project - which entailed replacing the existing concrete deck, parapets and superstructure - was originally conceived in three stages to keep the bridge deck open to traffic throughout construction. The contractor instead proposed to perform the work in two, replacing the center of the bridge deck and one side simultaneously while utilizing lane shifts to maintain the flow of traffic. A VECP was submitted for review by various departments within NJDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and was subsequently approved.

"Value engineering allows us to identify opportunities and recommend alternatives aimed at improving the value of the project in terms of cost, constructability, and maintenance of traffic, while maintaining the basic functional requirements and complying with the purpose and need of the project," said Capital Program Support Project Manager Mark Hauske, who was involved in reviewing the VECP for this project. "It's one way that we're able to deliver better results in less time and money for the benefit of everyone who uses our roadways."

Construction began in January 2019 and ended in January 2020, a full nine months ahead of the original November 2020 completion date.

NJDOT Resident Engineer/ Principal Engineer Christopher Moore (Right) standing with Todd Hollywood, a contractor from JONASZ Precast who worked on the project.

"I would like to thank everyone who had a hand in helping us complete this project nine months ahead of schedule," said Christopher Moore, NJDOT's Resident Engineer on the project. "We're very proud of the work we've done to rebuild the bridge in such a short time frame, reducing inconvenience for motorists who travel in this area."

The Route 47 Bridge over I-295 was built in 1960 as a two span, simply supported, pre-stressed concrete I-beam structure. It is 181-feet long and 79-feet wide. The deck and superstructure were in poor condition and the bridge was functionally obsolete due to limited vertical clearance. The $8 million federally-funded project increased vertical clearance to modern standards of 16-feet, 6-inches. It also included the installation of new road signs that are separate from the bridge structure, which makes it easier for NJDOT crews to maintain them without closing lanes on the bridge.

Happy Engineers Week

NJDOT celebrated National Engineers Week championed by the National Society of Professional Engineers on February 16 -22, 2020 with social media posts of some of our award-winning staff

NJDOT staff attend Transportation Research Board Conference.

Transportation Research Board attendees share conference insights with peers

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) held its 99th Annual Meeting on January 12-16, 2020 in Washington D.C. with the theme ***A Century of Progress: Foundation for the Future***. The annual meeting attracts more than 14,000 transportation professionals from around the world, covering all transportation modes, with more than 5,000 presentations in nearly 800 sessions and workshops.

NJDOT staff from the Division of Multimodal Services; Division of Statewide Planning; Transportation Operations Systems and Support; Division of Environmental Resources; and Division of Highway and Traffic Design attended the conference. To share the knowledge they gained from the event with other NJDOT staff, Michael Russo, Assistant Commissioner of Planning, Multimodal and Grants Administration (PMGA) and Amanda Gendek, Manager for the Bureau of Research and State TRB Representative, held an annual TRB Conference Recap Meeting at headquarters.

Staff who attended the conference created PowerPoint presentations outlining the sessions that they attended and led discussions with their peers at the Recap Conference Meeting that was held on February 13 in the Multipurpose Room. NJDOT staff that attended TRB included;

- Aiden Rogers and Vincent Masciandaro, from the Office of Maritime Resources
- Shadman Mohammad from Multimodal Grants and Programs
- Maryiam Kazmi from the Bureau of Freight Planning and Services
- Monica Etz and Brian Leckie from the MPO Liaison Unit, within the Bureau of Statewide Strategies
- Pragna Shah, from the Research Bureau
- Parth Oza and Asim Frank Zaman, from Operations Support and Engineering
- Caroline Birsner and John J. Riggi, from the Bureau of Environmental Program Resources
- Jhonatan Diaz-Santana, from the Bureau of Roadway Design

The presentations are posted on the Bureau of Research's Tech Transfer website at:
https://www.njdottechtransfer.net/2020/03/02/2020-njdot-trb-annual-meeting-recap/

Please save the date for the 100th Annual Transportation Research Board (TRB) Meeting which is scheduled for January 24-28, 2021 with registration opening in late August with the program finalized in mid-November.

TRANSPORTER
E-News

News for and about
NJ Department of Transportation
Employees and Retirees

Governor
Phil Murphy

Lt. Governor
Sheila Oliver

Commissioner
Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti

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The NJDOT Toastmasters Club's 16th Anniversary Open House

The NJDOT Toastmasters Club celebrated its 16th Anniversary with an Open House on January 22, 2020. Staff eager to explore club opportunities filled the room to capacity. The Toastmasters Club has been active at NJDOT since November 2003 and the current administration continues to support and encourage its growth. The Club provides staff members and guests a supportive and engaging environment in which to practice speaking, communication, and leadership skills.

Known for her excellent communication skills and relaxed speaking style, Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti addressed the audience beginning with a surprising statement that she was not always a comfortable public speaker. She became active in her church so that she could practice the skill. "When preparing a speech, write the way you speak and don't read from a PowerPoint," she shared. "As subject matter experts, you are knowledgeable," so simply sharing what you know in a "humbly confident" manner, as she does, will help you become an effective communicator. She shared her nervousness about speaking in front of the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. discussing the Federal Transportation Trust Fund. She said she practiced reading the testimony with a stopwatch – a technique used at the Toastmaster Club.

Michele Shapiro, NJDOT Human Resources Director and Eric Powers, NJDOT Capital Investment and Program Coordination Director provided enlightening and inspirational speeches as well.

At Toastmasters, members learn by speaking to groups and working with others in a supportive environment, as well as communicating creatively. Each meeting gives everyone an opportunity to learn skills through conducting meetings, giving impromptu and prepared speeches, and offering constructive evaluation.

Club President Ankita Jain provided details on how more than 100 members from NJDOT benefited from having joined the club, including earning more than 25 educational awards.

The meeting ensued with the regular program including a Word of the Day, which receives applause when a speaker incorporates it into their segment, and a Table Topics contest that has members presenting informal speeches.

Ankita and Vice President of Public Relations Barbara DeLucia earned Competent Leader awards, as well as long-time club member Carmen Roman. The club also honored veteran club members Andrew Swords and Miguel Faucette for sixteen years of membership and service devoted to the improvement of communication and leadership.

Department employees can attend a meeting as a guest and decide whether to join. The Club meets on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesday of each month, at 12:15 pm, for thirty minutes (lunchtime).

Check the NJDOT Toastmasters website for more information about the club, https://610159.toastmastersclubs.org/ or look for it on the NJDOT employee intranet.

You can contact the club by e-mail: DOT-Toastmasters.Club@dot.nj.gov

Martin Luther King Day and Black History Month events explored "African-Americans and the Vote"

The NJDOT Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Black History Month programs focused on "African-Americans and the Vote" during this presidential election year. In 2020, the African American voting block is a powerful force in determining the next President of the United States but acquiring this power took more than two-hundred years of struggle and bloodshed to achieve.

Rev. Dr. Melinda Contreras-Byrd, Ph.D., a N. J. state-licensed psychologist specializing in women and people of color was the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day keynote speaker at the January 15 event. She made the voting theme personal, stating that we all need to "have a voice" and "to be heard" in life. We must make certain that our opinions, thoughts and ideas are recognized and counted in life. "Be heard when you are in a room – do not sit quietly – let people know that what you said is worth hearing. Your point of view matters."

On the topic of voting, she said that African-Americans, and nearly all immigrant groups, had to fight for their right to vote and to be heard by the American government for more than 200 years. While laws provided the right to vote there were obstacles placed such as poll taxes, intimidation, literacy laws, and born-free grandfather rules blocking access to large groups of people. Martin Luther King, Jr., on March 25, 1965 took a stand and led the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama to enforce the right to vote and give African-Americans the power to be heard.

Raise your voice and cast a vote in the 2020 election, Dr. Contreras-Byrd empowered attendees, because the country is facing issues of immigration and at times, "teetering on oppression."

Talayia Little, Division of Civil Rights, held an NJDOT Spotlight interview with Kimbrali Davis, Manager, Multimodal Services, about her career path as an African-American woman. Kimbrali began by stating that throughout her academic career, African-American students represented only three percent of her graduating classes.

Encouraged by her mother, Kimbrali pursued an atypical degree for a woman, compounded by her ethnicity, in engineering from Rutgers University receiving a B.A. in Ceramic Engineering (now called Material Science Engineering). She has navigated a career in private sector work and now climbed the ranks here at NJDOT to Manager, Bureau of Aeronautics and Office of Multimodal Programs through hard work, networking, patience, and the guidance of mentors and coaches.

Kimbrali's nuggets of wisdom: "Get out there…Venture outside of your comfort zone…Climb the ladder and learn at each rung.

The Black History Month event held on February 26 began with a welcome from NJDOT Director of Civil Rights & Affirmative Action Ivette Santiago-Green, an invocation by Thomas Jones, and an operatic performance by Chivonne Perkins. Jay Jimenez, Chief of Staff, gave rousing remarks about the division our nation is facing and stated, "The only way through this darkness is to unite through our votes…in this crucially important election to come…"Herman Lloyd, V.P. and Regional Leader (Philadelphia area) for the company, Traffic Planning and Design, Inc., retired PennDot executive, and highly respected engineer was the keynote speaker. He shared his career path and his ability to climb to an executive position as an African-American. His advice to others is to vote for yourself - advocate for yourself in life. Seek out those that have the authority to promote you and let them know that you are interested in a higher level position, that you feel confident that you can perform well in the proposed position, and that you are willing to work as hard as necessary to satisfy the employer's expectations of the person in the role.

The event concluded with a marvelous and bountiful array of food and drink served to the attendees.

Contractor Venture Forum for disadvantaged and small business enterprises was a great success

The NJDOT Office of Civil Rights & Affirmative Action held its fourth Contractor Venture Forum on February 21 at headquarters. The Forum reinforced NJDOT's commitment to small, disadvantaged, and minority owned businesses (SBE/DBE) by providing business leaders with the opportunity to meet with prime contractors and consulting firms that are currently working with NJDOT.

The event featured information-packed presentations from multiple NJDOT staff.

Nadir A. Jones, Manager, Contract Compliance and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)/ Emerging Small Business Enterprise (ESBE) Support, hosted the Forum and kept the agenda flowing smoothly.

Ivette Santiago-Green, Esq., Director of Civil Rights & Affirmative Action, welcomed attendees. Hester Agudosi Esq., Director of Civil Rights & Affirmative Action, and Jay Jimenez, NJDOT Chief of Staff, expressed the administration's commitment to inclusion and diversity in procurement practices.

The event featured presentations on navigating the business process including:

David Kern, NJDOT Procurement Manager, who provided a comprehensive overview of NJDOT procurement processes for construction, professional services and materials, equipment and supplies.

Joseph Dee, Deputy Director, Program Advancement, familiarized attendees with the NJDOT website and BidX, and explained how they can access advertisements and solicitations for the State Fiscal Year 2020 $2.3 billion Transportation Capital Plan budget.

Parth Oza, Asst. Division Director, Operations, Support & Engineering, stressed the importance of contractors and consultants in maintaining highways, bridges and "keeping the roads open" statewide.

Deval Desai, Local Aid & Economic Development, reinforced the opportunities available in county and municipal government for smaller but essential projects.

On behalf of the Division of Civil Rights & Affirmative Action, Nana Amponsah and Cheryl Taliaferro presented a synopsis of the DBE, ESBE and SBE certification and compliance programs.

Reiterating NJDOT's commitment to leveling the playing field, Lydia Harper from NJDOT, and Maddie Chandran, Managing Partner from the company r6catalyst, spoke of the DBE Supportive Services Program that provides free, in-depth business and technical training to select applicants.

Some Support Services Program alumni shared their experiences and achievements from the program with the audience.

The overwhelming attendance and enthusiasm were testament to the resounding success of the 2020 Contractor Venture Forum. There were more than 50 small businesses, many of whom were first-time attendees. Established consultants and contractors exhibited at the Forum and actively participated in networking that followed the presentations.

For further information, email DOT.DBE_ESBEPrograms@dot.nj.gov

TID DOTS!

Tid Dots is a collection of employee awards, retirements, service anniversaries and other sharable and NJDOT pride-producing news.

NJDOT staff were "caught doing good" on I-76 westbound while on their way to respond to another incident near the Walt Whitman Bridge. The group saw a stalled car in a very dangerous location, surrounded by three lanes of traffic on both sides. Fortunately, there was no westbound traffic due to a road closure so the group was able to push US Army Sergeant Ben Katzenberger's car into a safe location before the roadway was reopened. Great NJDOT staff flexing their Commitment to Communities muscle once again!

(Left to Right) Joe O'Brien (HOT 2, Operations Crew 414); Andrew Woods (HOT 2, Operations Crew 414); Sgt Ben Katzenberger, US Army; Kim Jones (Safety Service Patrol Operator- Cherry Hill); Dennis Caltagirone (Sr. Transportation Analyst, OEMS&R); Stephen Bonamassa (Safety Service Patrol Operator-Cherry Hill); Daniel Murray (Safety Service Patrol Operator-Cherry Hill).

NJDOT was recently named a 2020 Top Employer in Transportation and Government for our outreach, dedication and commitment to building a diverse workforce by DiversityJobs.com. NJDOT is an equal opportunity employer and encourages and supports diversity in the workplace. NJDOT encourages all candidates to apply, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, age or sexual preference. NJDOT is upholding its Commitment to ALL Communities.

New Jersey Alliance for Action awarded NJDOT with the "New Jersey Leading Infrastructure Project" award for the Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges Contract 4 at an event held on February 20, 2020. The award highlights innovative, pioneering and landmark construction initiatives that greatly impact the state's economy and honors the businesses and organizations that partner to ensure project success. Pankesh Patel, Exec. Reg. Mgr. and Rt. 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges PM, received the NJDOT award (center, flanked by a US Coast Guard rep. and project contractors from Arora & Assoc. and WSP).

First Place, 6-9 years old
Grace Sun

First Place, 14-17 years old
Xinyi Christine Zhang

First Place, 10-13 years old
Vinuta Ramakrishnan

NJDOT staff judge New Jersey's 2020 Aviation Art Contest Submissions for national competition

New Jersey Department of Transportation staff had the honor and challenge of selecting their favorite works of art, created by children from across the state, to represent New Jersey and potentially the country, in the 2020 International Aviation Art competition sponsored by Fédération Aéronautique International.

Clare Mansfield, NJDOT Bureau of Aeronautics, is New Jersey's contest director. She led the team that organized, evaluated and presented the New Jersey student art submissions to the NJDOT staff for final voting. 155 entries were received for the contest, in three age categories, making the selection process challenging. The 2020 contest theme, "Flying Yesterday and Tomorrow," asked young people to put their eyes towards the sky, use their imaginations to consider how the dream of flight has changed over time.

The final national competition judging is done in Washington, D.C. where New Jersey's finalists will be in the running to represent the country in the international portion of the contest. The national finalists are expected to be announced in March and the international selection is held in April.

NEW JERSEY WINNERS ANNOUNCED for the 2020 International Aviation Art Contest

"Flying Yesterday and Tomorrow"

Category I - ages 6 – 9 years
First Place - Grace Sun, Livingston
Second Place - Nishka Das, Bayonne
Third Place - Meryl Patel, North Brunswick
Honorable Mention - Anay Krishna, Kendall Park

Category II - ages 10 – 13 years
First Place - Vinuta Ramakrishnan, North Brunswick
Second Place - Tara Chidambaram, Somerset
Third Place - Lynn Sun, Livingston
Honorable Mention - Rukiyye Sirrik, Somerset

Category III - ages 14 – 17 years
First Place - Xinyi Christine Zhang, Kendall Park
Second Place - Olivia Chou, Parsippany
Third Place - Thomas Vonoehsen, Scotch Plains
Honorable Mention - Angela Chang Muriel, Plainfield

NJDOT Service Awards

MARCH

40 YEARS OF SERVICE
Cynthia Dey

35 YEARS OF SERVICE
Annunziata Dempsey

20 YEARS OF SERVICE
Bruce Baker
Ashok Brahmbhatt
Ryan Cox
John DeSimone

20 YEARS OF SERVICE
Michael Graham
Rafael Mendez
Charles Metz
Tiffany Reynolds
Vincent Vesce

Gregory Varone, Jr. aka Mr. Carvel

On March 1, Gregory Varone, Jr. retired from his position as Principal Engineer in Transportation and PMRS1 after 35 years and 8 months of service at NJDOT. Gregory held numerous positions of increasing seniority over the years including Assistant Engineer, Senior Engineer, and worked in Field Survey, Design Squad 1, Bureau of Utilities, and Project Management. Gregory chose engineering because he enjoyed drawing and design work, so it seemed to be a good career choice.

Gregory credits Joe Fasanella for his mentorship and guidance during his career. "He was my boss and a Principal Engineer at the time and he tucked me under his wing and taught me the ins and outs of managing a highway design project. We worked on a high profile job, the Palisades Parkway project in Fort Lee. We designed guiderail along the entire length of the project," said Gregory.

Gregory's most memorable assignment was the Route 29 Tunnel project in Trenton. "It was an engineer's dream," Gregory said, due to its complexity and the numerous obstacles faced during construction. An American Indian burial ground was discovered on the site requiring work to cease until the Historical Society completed excavating the remains and artifacts.

In addition, the project required powerful blasts for excavation. Maintaining the structural integrity of the foundations of the private homes along Lamberton Street was a concern for the engineers. Gregory also stated that solving construction problems and contractor issues was integral to the project success and the challenge of the job.

When asked to share some advice to new people in the profession at NJDOT, he said, "stay with the state and get as much training and education as you can."

Gregory owns two Carvel ice cream shops, one in Hamilton Township and the other in Hopewell, so life after NJDOT will include focusing more time on running those stores. He also will enjoy more free time with his wife Lisa.

Congratulations Gregory and we wish you well on your next adventure!

Retirees

March 2020 - Linda Forrester, 16 years; Thomas Gallagher, 28 years; James Mesinger, 36 years; Arpad Molnar, 36 years; Jayesh P. Patel, 33 years; Hector Rosa, 15 years; Manmohan Singh, 36 years; Gregory Varone, 35 years; Frederick Williams, 33 years